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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAMAKO 000676

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SUBJECT: PRESIDENT TOURE'S INAUGURATION

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Classified By: Political Officer Aaron Sampson, Embassy Bamako, for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

1.(U) Summary: Seven heads of state attended the June 8 inauguration that swore in President Amadou Toumani Toure (ATT) for a second five-year term as President of Mali. Secretary of Agriculture Michael Johanns headed the U.S.

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presidential delegation. During his inaugural speech, ATT pledged to support women's involvement in politics and society. He also suggested formalizing an official role for the leader of Mali's political opposition - a departure from previous governments in Mali that have attempted to govern by consensus. ATT reiterated these points during a June 9 meeting with Representative Earl Pomeroy, who attended the ceremony at the invitation of ATT, representing the U.S. Congress. He also discussed the progress of Mali's compact with the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC), the impending privatization of Mali's cotton parastatal and Mali's efforts in the global war on terror. End Summary.

ATT Begins Second Five Year Term

2.(U) President Amadou Toumani Toure (ATT) was sworn in for a second five year term as President of Mali on June 8. Seventeen heads of state received invitations for the ceremony but only seven (from Gabon, Congo-Brazzaville, the Central African Republic, Chad, Mauritania, Burkina Faso and Benin) actually attended. The G-8 Summit in Germany prevented several African leaders from traveling to Bamako, including former President of Mali and current African Union chairman Alpha Oumar Konare. The inauguration constituted French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner's first official visit to Africa. Secretary of Agriculture Johanns led the U.S. presidential delegation (reftel).

3.(U) Nearly all of Mali's political elite attended the inauguration, including opposition leader and National Assembly president Ibrahim Boubacar Keita and former Tuareg rebel leader Iyad ag Ghali. Two other opposition leaders, Tiebile Drame and Soumeylou Boubey Maiga, were conspicuously absent although it was later reported that each had "prior engagements." In his inaugural speech ATT pledged to increase economic, education and political opportunities for Malian women. Appropriating the "Things Must Change" campaign slogan of Boubey Maiga, who opposed ATT during the April 29 presidential election, ATT said he too believed that Mali needed to change and promised to initiate new reforms. To this end, he recommended investing the leader of Mali's

political opposition - presumably Ibrahim Boubacar Keita - with a formal role within the government. This would mark a departure from previous governments in Mali which attempted to incorporate all nation political actors by governing through consensus.

Rep. Pomeroy's Meeting With ATT

4.(U) Rep. Pomeroy and Charge d'Affaires, a.i. met with ATT on June 9. Topics of discussion included the progress of Mali's MCC compact and continued U.S. support for girls' education in Mali. ATT spoke of his concern for the effective implementation of the Compact, and noted that the MCA, which previously reported to the Prime Minister's office, now reports directly to the presidency. ATT said he made this change in order to highlight to the Malian people and the USG his sense of personal moral responsibility for effective use of these resources.

5.(C) ATT reiterated pledges made in his inaugural speech to focus on education and the role of women in Malian society. He also indicated that he intended to reinforce the role of Mali's political opposition by providing a seat in certain key governmental institutions for a formally recognized opposition leader. Having also noted the conspicuous absence of two opposition leaders - Tiebile Drame and Soumeylou Boubey Maiga - from the inauguration ceremony, ATT said that Drame was traveling and the Boubey Maiga had telephoned him on the evening of the inauguration to apologize for his absence.

6.(U) ATT said that Mali appreciated positions articulated by the U.S. at the recent G-8 summit regarding increased aid to combat the spread of HIV/AIDS and support for Darfur. He said he also appreciated the direct and frank approach adopted by the U.S. regarding the issue of cotton subsidies. ATT reported that Mali had informed the World Bank that it

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would be ready to privatize its cotton parastatal in 2008 as planned, but that the World Bank must be careful not to "kill" Mali's cotton sector as it did, said ATT, in Benin, Togo and Cote d'Ivoire. He stressed the importance of selecting strong partners and engaging Malian cotton farmers in the privatization process. He also suggested exploring opportunities to add value to Malian cotton within Mali, prior to exportation. Rep. Pomeroy said his experiences in the U.S. underscored for him the vital importance of closely engaging farmers in reform processes.

Anti-Terrorism Efforts

7.(C) ATT described the threat posed by AQIM in the Sahel as "evolving into something dangerous" impacting Mauritania, Mali, Niger, Algeria and Chad. He said "Algerian" terrorist elements active in northern Mali are supported by three activities - smuggling, the drug trade and arms trafficking. He noted that while some Tuaregs are also involved in these activities, and others may have commercial relationships that provide logistic support to AQIM, neither Malian nor Nigerien Tuaregs share AQIM's extremist ideology.

8.(C) President Toure thanked USAID and the U.S. military for the many development projects targeting Tuaregs and others in northern Mali. ATT said any attempt to resolve the threat posed by AQIM must be "collective." He said Mali was prepared to partner with the U.S. against terrorism but reiterated that Mali lacked the means to control frontiers measuring approximately 600,000 km. The President said military training, material support and information sharing were the most important elements the U.S. could provide to Mali. He also said he was looking forward to Admiral McCraven's upcoming visit from EUCOM.

19. (U) Congressman Pomeroy also met with the Prime Minister Ousmane Maiga, who echoed many of the points made by President Toure on USG assistance efforts. Maiga expressed his appreciation for USAID and MCC programs, and praised the excellent state of bilateral relations between the two countries.
Leonard